

# American Communal Societies Quarterly

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## Hamilton College Library “Home Notes”

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## Hamilton College Library “Home Notes”

### Hamilton College Library Reopens Rare Book Room<sup>1</sup>

#### The Patricia Pogue Couper Research Room Dedicated

On April 14, 2011, Burke Library at Hamilton College held a formal reopening of the Emerson Rare Book Room and dedicated the Patricia Pogue Couper Research Room. Both Patsy Couper and Dr. Walter Brumm were honored for their contributions to the Library’s special collections.

The rare book room had been closed since June 2010 while it was being expanded to include a research room, staff room, and office for the curator of special collections and archives. A new ceiling was installed, along with new carpeting and a separate air-handling system so that the temperature and humidity for the rare book room could be controlled separately from that of the rest of the library. Two new display cabinets inside the research room and three just outside provide space for the display of some of the important works held in the rare book collection.

Patricia Pogue Couper, wife of the late Hamilton alumnus and life trustee Richard W. Couper, class of 1944, has supported Hamilton throughout her life, and this support has continued since the death of her husband in 2006. The Coupers created and sustained the Couper endowment fund, which provides support for the acquisition and preservation of rare books, as well as for renovation work within the library. They also established an endowment to fund the college librarian’s position, which is named in their honor.

Dr. Walter Brumm, retired sociology professor from California University in Pennsylvania, has been a major donor to the Emerson Rare Book Room. His gift to the Hamilton College Communal Societies Collection makes it one of the country’s leading collections by and about

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1. This report is taken in part from Hamilton College news reports by Holly Foster and Esther Malisov ’13.

the American Shakers and other intentional communities. Brumm, in explaining his gift said, “It is my intention that this gift enrich an already significant collection of such materials at an institution of higher learning, where there is an emphasis on innovative and rigorous academic programs, including interdisciplinary coursework, comparative studies, collaborative learning and an opportunity to promote the use of an extensive and rich archival resource.”

College President Joan Hinde Stewart, Elizabeth J. McCormack Professor of English Margaret Thickstun, and Couper Librarian Randall Ericson spoke at the event, which was followed by tours of the newly designed facility.

Curator Christian Goodwillie and his assistant Mark Tillson mounted an exhibition in celebration of the opening of the Rare Book Room. The



Dr. Walter Brumm and Patricia Pogue Couper

exhibition showcased highlights from the communal societies collection, Beinecke Lesser Antilles collection, and Ezra Pound collection, as well as materials from the general rare books collection. Materials donated by honoree Walter A. Brumm featured prominently in the display.

## **Ilyon Woo Discusses Her Book *The Great Divorce***

A highlight of the reopening of the rare book room was a presentation by author Ilyon Woo, titled, "A Mystery in the Archives: Uncovering the Story of *The Great Divorce*." In her presentation Woo took her audience through her research process—the hours of fruitless searching, the discovery of tiny pieces of information pertinent to the story, and the eureka moments where the pieces fit together and the story became clear. In her highly regarded book, *The Great Divorce: A Nineteenth-Century Mother's Extraordinary Fight against Her Husband, the Shakers, and Her Times*, Woo tells the story of Eunice Chapman's struggle against nineteenth-century society and the Shakers—a struggle that shook the New York State legislature and incited ridicule, sympathy, outrage, support and even rioting. Woo's book vividly chronicles this dramatic story.

Eunice Chapman's husband, James Chapman, was an alcoholic who abandoned his wife and three children and later discovered the Shaker religion. The Shakers welcomed James and he found the strength to overcome his addiction and return home. However, when Eunice refused to move to a Shaker village with James and the children, James fled once again, this time taking the children with him. The next few years of Eunice's life were dedicated to getting her children back by any means necessary. Her emotional pleas engrossed the public, her frightening threats made Shaker leaders take notice, and her logical mind appealed to government officials.

Eunice Chapman's case was widely considered to be shameful and dishonorable, and she was ridiculed and viewed as a lunatic. At that time, the only grounds for a legal divorce were well-proven adultery; a man could do as he pleased with his children as the head of household. Some claimed the case would embolden other women to rebel against their circumstances, and these detractors demanded a speedy dismissal of the case. Even Thomas Jefferson objected to Chapman's allegedly vulgar behavior.

Ultimately, Chapman won her case. She was the first and only woman

of her time to be granted a legal divorce and custody over her children in the absence of adultery. As Woo explained, Chapman “convinced [the legislature] to give the unthinkable.” Her real fight, on the other hand, was not yet finished, as she was still unaware of where the Shakers were hiding her children. After much searching, she discovered their whereabouts in the Enfield, New Hampshire, Shaker village. After a dramatic night that nearly escalated into violence, Eunice was finally reunited with her children.

The story is far from one-sided, however, and Woo’s lecture included excerpts from James’ letters and Shaker manuscripts, an original of which lay on the table in front of her. These documents came from Burke Library’s Communal Societies Collection. Throughout her presentation Woo wove together the story of Eunice Chapman and Woo’s own story of the thrills and frustration of the research process. Woo described one occasion on which she dug tediously through twenty-six boxes of legal documents with very little to show for it and contrasted that with the “eureka moment” when “you know you have a book.”

### **Scenes from the reopening of the Rare Book Room**



Randy Ericson speaking at the dedication ceremony.





Exhibit of Shaker material donated by Walter Brumm.



Fred Jordan (left), independent conservator, who has preserved many items in the Hamilton College rare book collection, and Walter Brumm.



From left to right: Curator Christian Goodwillie, David Newell (back to camera), Ralph Stenstrom, Virginia Newell, and Walter Brumm.



Adventist chart showing the end of the world in 1855, and a collection of Harmonist wine labels.

## New Acquisitions

### Joanna's Second "Trial": The Verdict.

*Examination of Prophecies. The prophecies of Joanna Southcott have been closely examined for seven days, by twenty-three persons, chosen by Divine command ...*

London: printed by J. Greenham, 45, Drurylane. [1803].

This is surely a key document in the story of the extraordinary life of Joanna Southcott (1750-1814). She had begun to attract public notice and make converts in 1801 when she published prophetic claims in *The Strange Effects of Faith; with Remarkable Prophecies of Things Which Are to Come*. In 1802 she had declared that she was about to bring into the world a spiritual man, Shiloh, and by so doing she put the Christian establishment in somewhat of a turmoil. In December 1801 she had already been subject to a "trial," or examination, by seven men with whom she had been corresponding, including three Church of England clergymen. All seven reconvened, together with sixteen others, for Joanna's second "trial" on January 12, 1803. They included Rev. Stanhope Bruce, an Anglican clergyman; Peter Morrison from Liverpool; William Sharp the engraver and London radical; Rev. Thomas Foley; George Turner, a Leeds merchant; Rev. Thomas Webster, a lecturer at two London churches; John Wilson; Elias Carpenter, the owner of a paper mill; and W. Roundell Wetherell, a surgeon. The present document was their verdict, which in effect cleared the way for Joanna to continue her eccentric course almost unchallenged.

Now, we believe, and are clear, from the diligent examination of the writings of Joanna Southcott, that they are of God by the Spirit of Jesus, which is the Spirit of Prophecy ... and in them we found wondrous prophecies, the greatest wisdom of counsel, and the clearest revelations of peace and happiness ... and to the above testimony we here sign our names. [23 names follow] ... References to the above persons may be had as below. Joanna Southcott is now so clear that her calling is of God, that she is ready to meet any Divines, or any of the learned, and will *prove from the Scriptures*, that they must deny their Bibles, if they deny that her writings come from the Divine inspiration, as *some already* have done. And let them weigh deep, how a thing sown in so much weakness in 1792, by a simple woman, is now rising with so much



power, according to the truth of her sealed prophecies, some of which will soon be laid before the public.

OCLC identifies copies at only seven libraries in U.S., and in the U.K. at The British Library, The Bodleian, and Cambridge.

## EXAMINATION OF PROPHECIES:

**T**HE PROPHECIES of JOANNA SOUTHCOTT have been closely examined for Seven Days, by Twenty-three Persons, chosen by DIVINE command, and proved by them all to be from the SPIRIT of the LIVING GOD. The Examination of her Writings was made public to every one that wished to come, and none were refused admittance. From Twenty to Forty were present six days, and on the seventh, when *all* was summed up, and Joanna had given her clear Evidence; the *Twenty-three* unanimously agreed that the Calling was of God, as well as Thirty-five others, who were then present, and all signed their names of approbation to the ABOVE TRUTH. Now, if any will say the Calling is not of God, they must say, the Lord had not a Friend to step forward to defend His Cause, and prevent a Woman from saying, "*The Lord saith,*" when they think He had not spoken. So if they still say, this Calling is not of God, they must say, Religion is gone from the World; as unbelievers were publicly invited in the Newspapers, and privately invited by repeated letters sent to Ministers and others. So now let every mouth be stopped, and every tongue be silent, and know the end is near at hand, that SATAN'S POWER WILL BE DESTROYED, and CHRIST'S KINGDOM, NEAR TO COME.

We, the CHOSEN PERSONS, believe it a duty incumbent on us, to congratulate the Public, even all the Generation of Adam, on the glorious, happy, and blessed prospect of the speedy fulfilment of the great Promises of the Gospel, in the *Seed of the Woman* bruizing the Serpent's head, and the Restoration of Man from the Fall to the IMAGE of GOD, by the Merits and Death of JESUS CHRIST our Saviour, and of the destruction of the works of Satan, the Devil, and his being chained down to the Bottomless Pit for a thousand years, and a seal set upon him, that he may not deceive the Nations any more till the thousand years shall be fulfilled—That the Earth may be filled with the Glory of God, and all the Kingdoms of this World become the Kingdoms of our God and His CHRIST, and that He will reign a thousand years: having subdued all things unto HIMSELF, that there may be no more Curse; but the Name of the LORD alone be exalted and worshipped by all the Families of the Earth, and that all Flesh may see the Salvation of God.

Now, we believe, and are clear, from the diligent Examination of the Writings of Joanna Southcott, that THEY ARE of GOD BY THE SPIRIT of JESUS, which is the Spirit of Prophecy, the MIGHTY COUNSELLOR, THE EVERLASTING FATHER, THE PRINCE of PEACE: and in them are found wondrous Prophecies, the greatest wisdom of Counsel, and the clearest Revelations of Peace and Happiness, *resting upon the Scriptures*, pointing out how Man will be enabled to do the Will of God on Earth, as the Angels do it in Heaven;—and to the above Testimony we here sign our Names:

\*Rev. STANHOPE BRUCE,  
\*PETER MORISON,  
WILLIAM JOWETT,  
\*WILLIAM SHARP,  
ELIAS CARPENTER,  
W. ROUNDELL WETHERELL,  
\*GEORGE TURNER,  
CHARLES TAYLOR,

\*JOHN WILSON,  
\*Rev. THOMAS WEBSTER,  
\*Rev. THO. P. FOLEY,  
—  
CHARLES ABBOTT,  
RICHARD LAW,  
ELIAS JAMESON FIELD,  
GEORGE STOCKS,

JOHN MORRIS,  
WILLIAM COY,  
WILLIAM BELK,  
WILLIAM TAYLOR,  
JOHN YOUNG,  
WM. LAYTON WINTER,  
JOHN TORIN,  
THOMAS STEPHENS.

References to the above Persons may be had as below.

JOANNA SOUTHCOTT is now so clear that her Calling is of God, that she is ready to meet any Divines, or any of the learned, and will *prove from the Scriptures*, that they must deny their Bibles, if they deny that her Writings come from Divine Inspiration, as *some already* have done. And let them weigh deep, how a thing sown in so much weakness in 1792, by a simple Woman, is now rising with so much Power, according to the Truth of her sealed Prophecies, some of which will soon be laid before the Public.

JOANNA SOUTHCOTT'S PROPHECIES sold at E. I. FIELD'S, No. 3, Broad Court, Long Acre, London; and at SYMONS'S, Gandy Lane, Exeter.  
PADDINGTON, JANUARY 22d, 1805.

Witness to the Truth of the above Subscriptions,  
WILLIAM SHARP, and E. CARPENTER,

London: Printed by J. GREENHAM, 45, Drury-lane.

*Sold at Delights opposite  
the old London Inn St Nicholas Exeter*

## Zoar Collection

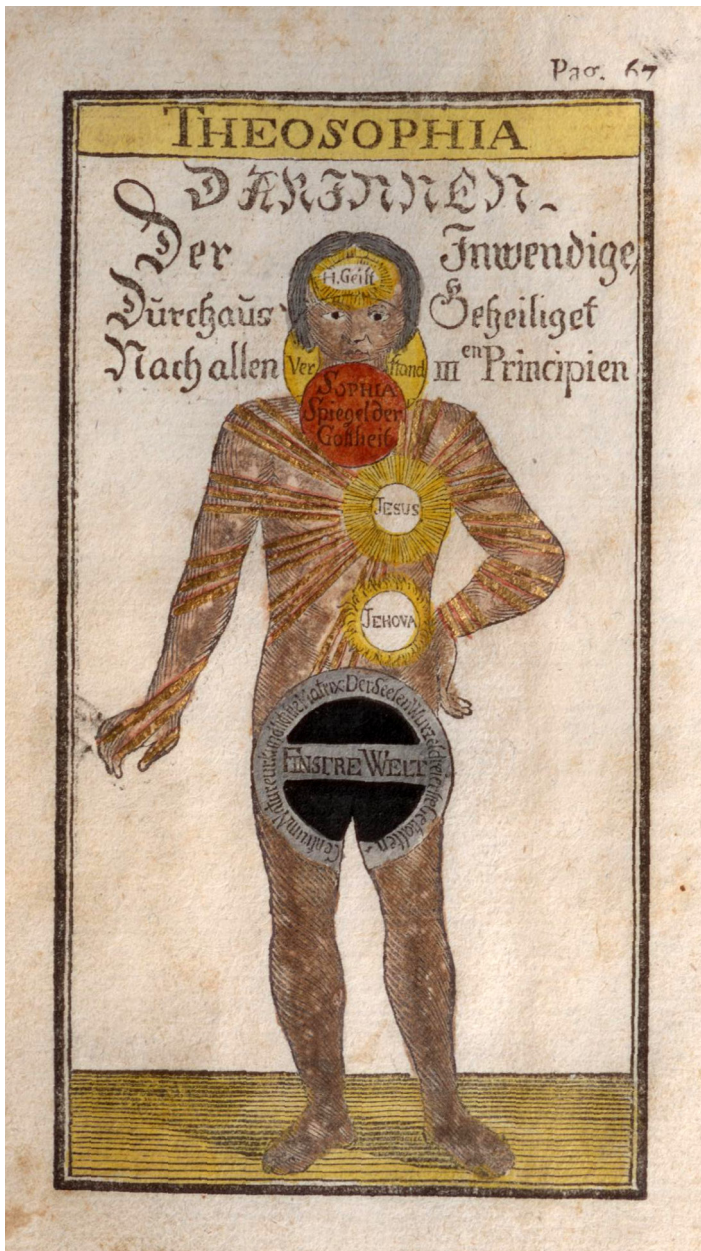
Hamilton College has acquired a remarkable collection of manuscripts and imprints from the Society of Separatists at Zoar, Ohio. This group of dissenters from the German Lutheran Church emigrated from Württemberg in 1817 and formed a community in Tuscarawas County. Philadelphia Quakers loaned money to help Separatist leader Joseph Bimeler establish his settlement. By 1818 approximately two hundred Zoarites had arrived in Ohio. The name Zoar is taken from the biblical account of Lot, who escaped to Zoar from Sodom in the book of Genesis. The people at Zoar organized themselves as a communal society in 1819 based on the need to share their resources for survival. The Zoarites prospered through the routing of the Ohio and Erie Canal through their land. Their leader Joseph Bimeler died on August 31, 1853. In 1898 the communal structure of life at Zoar was dismantled and all property was shared among the remaining residents.

The collection acquired by Hamilton consists of 130 printed books, bound manuscripts, and manuscript correspondence. Many of the printed books are early European editions of the writings of Pietist mystics such as Gerhard Tersteegen, Jakob Böhme, and Johann Arndt. Among the manuscripts are two Zoar musical part-books, and two account books from the Zoar store covering the years 1844-1869. The manuscript correspondence includes a number of letters sent between the Harmonists at Economy, Pennsylvania, and the Separatists at Zoar. Another interesting cross-communal connection is found in a Zoar-owned copy of the 1805 Community of True Inspiration (Amana) hymnal *Davidisches Psalterspiel* printed at Büdingen, Germany. The collection represents the largest gathering of Zoar materials outside of the Ohio Historical Society.



The engraved frontispiece to *Microcosmische Vorspiele des neuen Himmels und der neuen Erde* (Frankfurt and Leipzig, 1784). The Separatists at Zoar, like many American communal societies with German roots, were deeply interested in the spiritual aspects of alchemy. Whereas practical alchemy sought to turn base metals into gold, spiritual alchemy used meditative writings and prayer to focus the soul on the divine, transforming the practitioner into an ever more Christ-like being.





*Theosophia* from *Eine kurze Eröffnung und Anweisung der dreyen Principien und Welten im Menschen* by the German mystic Johann Graber (Berlin and Leipzig, 1779).





*Der gantz Erdliche Natürliche, Finstere Mensch* from *Eine kurze Eröffnung und Anweisung der dreyen Principien und Welten im Menschen* by the German mystic Johann Graber (Berlin and Leipzig, 1779).

## “First Work on Linotype By Benjamin Apl 2-07”

This intriguing scrap of paper represents a pivotal moment in the history of the Israelite House of David, of Benton Harbor, Michigan. The House of David used the press effectively throughout the twentieth century to spread their message of the ingathering of the elect. The press that they used was a Linotype, a type of press that was first used in 1886 for the *New York Tribune*. The typist has a keyboard which uses metal matrices (molds of letters) to compose letters from a molten lead-based alloy. These characters are then set together and used to print a page. The type can then be all melted down and used for the next project. The Linotype proved to be a cheap and efficient way for the Israelites to issue their pamphlets and monthly periodical. In fact, a later Linotype press at the House of David is still in operation today where printer Willie Robertson issues the newspaper *Shiloh's Messenger of Wisdom* each month. It is significant that Israelite messenger/leader Benjamin Purnell chose to type “Mary & Benjamin. Graft” on this document, thus emphasizing their shared role as the “seventh messenger” of the Israelite faith.

## Jezreel's Tower

Jezreel's Tower (also known as Jezreel's Temple) was built in Gillingham, Kent, England in the 1880s. It was demolished in 1961. Hamilton College has recently acquired a stunning real photo postcard of the structure dating from circa 1900. James Roland White, later known as James Jershom Jezreel, was born about 1851. He became interested in the teachings of Joanna Southcott in the late 1870s. White joined a band of Southcottians, and soon produced a volume of writings, *The Flying Roll*, inspired by Southcott. He also adopted his new sobriquet James Jershom Jezreel and claimed the prophetic mantle of Southcott's lineage. Jezreel decided to construct a building as a headquarters for the ingathering of the 144,000 “elect” as specified in the Book of Revelation. He chose a site at the top of Chatham Hill, highest point in the area. Jezreel's church was called the New and Latter House of Israel. Jezreel wanted the tower to be a perfect cube, each side 144 feet long. Architects he consulted persuaded him that this was impractical, and he settled on a design that was 124 feet on each

*First Work on  
Lino type by Benjamin  
Apr 2007*

Mary & Benjamin	House of David	1902.	1861-62
Mary & Benjamin	House of David	1902.	1861-62
Mary & Benjamin	House of David	1902.	1861-62
Mary & Benjamin	House of David	1902.	1861-62
Mary & Benjamin	House of David	1902.	1861-62
Mary & Benjamin	House of David	1902.	1861-62
Mary & Benjamin	House of David	1902.	1861-62
Mary & Benjamin	House of David	1902.	1861-62
Mary & Benjamin	House of David	1902.	1861-62
Mary & Benjamin	House of David	1902.	1861-62
Mary & Benjamin	House of David	1902.	1861-62

Mary & Benjamin.	Graft	** *
Mary & Benjamin.	Graft	** *
Mary & Benjamin.	Graft	** *
Mary & Benjamin.	Graft	** *
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Shiloh's Messenger of Wisdom.	*****
Shiloh's Messenger of Wisdom.	*****
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Shiloh's Messenger of Wisdom.	*****
Shiloh's Messenger of Wisdom.	*****



side with 120-foot-high towers at the corners. The structure was built of steel and concrete. The trumpet and flying roll motifs were set into the exterior walls. Jezreel planned space for a printing press to churn out the massive volume of literature generated by the sect, as well as a circular amphitheatre designed to hold 5,000 worshippers. Jezreel died on March 2, 1885. The sect was taken over by his wife Clarissa, who was known as Queen Esther. It was under her guidance that construction of the tower commenced, beginning on September 19, 1885. Due to high costs Queen Esther converted her followers to a vegetarian diet—in contrast to her own lavish lifestyle. Queen Esther died in July 1888 at the age of twenty-eight. Work on the tower ceased as the sect fragmented. The building was offered for sale in 1897, and some of the Jezreelite followers continued to occupy parts of the structure. The tower was repossessed by its new owners in 1905, but was by then so derelict that it was partially demolished. Final demolition happened in 1961, thus erasing a curious and striking edifice from the rolling British countryside.

